

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 NEA-10 IO-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 SSO-00 NSCE-00

CCO-00 OPR-02 SY-10 USSS-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 OMB-01

TRSE-00 HEW-08 SPM-01 SCI-06 DRC-01 /192 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3403

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 5854

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, TS

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA

1. DURING APPROXIMATELY HALF HOUR CHAT WITH PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA OCTOBER 8, BEFORE I PRESENTED HIM WITH MOON ROCK ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT NIXON, FOLLOWING TOPICS WERE DISCUSSED.

2. SECURITY SITUATION. I APPLAUDED THE PRESIDENT'S UNEQUIVOCAL PUBLIC STATEMENT PREVIOUS DAY PROHIBITING DEMONSTRATIONS IN TUNISIA IN CONNECTION WITH MIDDLE EAST HOSTILITIES. I SAID THAT AMERICAN COMMUNITY SOMEWHAT APPREHENSIVE AT PROSPECT THAT ARAB FRUSTRATIONS AND PENT-UP EMOTIONS MIGHT BE RELEASED IF AND WHEN ISRAEILIS START TO ROLL BACK SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN ARMIES. PRESIDENT REITERATED THAT HE WOULD NOT TOLERATE ANY DEMONSTRATIONS,
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AND WOULD NOT ALLOW "THE HAIR ON ANYONE'S HEAD" TO BE

TOUCHED. JEWS IN TUNISIA ARE CITIZENS OF A FREE AND DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY AND HE WOULD NOT ALLOW THEM TO BE

ATTACKED. FOREIGNERS WOULD ALSO BE SAFE IN TUNISIA. I THANKED THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS UNDERTAKING AND SAID THAT IT WOULD SERVE AS PSYCHOLOGICAL REASSURANCE TO AMERICANS IN THIS COUNTRY.

3. MIDDLE EAST HOSTILITIES. PRESIDENT REPEATED THAT HZ HAD SAID YESTERDAY IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENT TO EFFECT THAT HE EXPECTED EVENTUAL ISRAELI COUNTERATTACK WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL. WHILE HE HOPED OTHERWISE, HE FORESAW AN ARAB DEFEAT. HE APPRECIATED THAT IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES SITUATION COULD BECOME TENSE AND FOR THIS REASON HE HAD SERVED NOTICE REGARDING MAINTAINING ORDER AND STABILITY IN COUNTRY.

4. BOURGUIBA PEACE INITIATIVE. WHEN I MENTIONED TO THE PRESIDENT THAT I HAD FOLLOWED HIS MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVE WITH INTEREST FROM MY HOSPITAL BED LAST SUMMER, HE SAID THAT HE HAD WANTED TO GET A DIALOGUE GOING BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND ARABS--AND ONE WHICH WAS BASED ON INTERNATIONAL LAW. I ALLUDED TO REMARKS OF PRESIDENT NIXON IN RECENT PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE SAID THAT USG WOULD ATTACHED HIGH PRIORITY TO SEARCH FOR MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.

5. NORTH AFRICAN CONFEDERATION. I SUGGESTED TO BOURGUIBA THAT MY GOVERNMENT WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HIS IMPRESSIONS WITH REGARD TO HIS RECENT MEETINGS WITH QADDAFI IN TRIPOLI AND ALGIERS. PRESIDENT SAID THAT QADDAFI IS YOUNG, IMPULSIVE LEADER WITHOUT EXPERIENCE. HE, BOURGUIBA, FELT HE HAD ESTABLISHED GOOD RAPPORT WITH QADDAFI AND THAT QADDAFI ADMIRE AND RESPECTED HIM. HE SAID HE THOUGHT THIS COULD BE USEFUL TO U.S. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT QADDAFI IS AMENDABLE TO IDEA OF "UNITED STATES OF NORTH AFRICA" AND FELT THAT SUCH A CONFEDERATION SOMEHOW WOULD NOT RUN COUNTER TO PROJECTED LIBYAN-EGYPTIAN FEDERATION. BOURGUIBA SAID THAT HE AND BOUMEDIENNE WERE PLEASED THAT

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EGYPTIAN-LIBYAN FEDERATION HAD NOT WORKED OUT. DURING HIS MEETING WITH BOUMEDIENNE AT LE KEF LAST SUMMER, BOUMEDIENNE HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT EGYPTIAN-LIBYAN FEDERATION WOULD PUT SOVIETS AT TUNISIAN BORDER. AGAIN, BOURGUIBA STRESSED THAT "UNITED STATES OF NORTH AFRICA" WAS SOMETHING FOR DISTANT FUTURE AND THAT FOR MOMENT AIM IS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY OF INTERESTS BETWEEN COUNTRIES.

6. SOVIET THREAT. BOURGUIBA CALLED ATTENTION TO WHAT HE CONSIDERED AS THREAT OF SOVIET EXPANSIONISM. HE WONDERED WHETHER U.S., WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED DETENTE WITH USSR, IS SUFFICIENTLY AWARE OF THIS THREAT. SOVIETS, HE SAID, ARE EXPANDING INTO INDIAN OCEAN, PERSIAN GULF, AND MEDITERRANEAN AND USG SHOULD BE ALERT TO DANGER. SIXTH FLEET IS NEEDED NOT JUST TO PROTECT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES BUT ALSO FOR PROTECTION OF NORTH AFRICAN COUNTRIES--AGAINST SOVIET AGGRESSION. HE MENTIONED SOVIET ESPIONAGE NETWORK WHICH HAS BEEN RECENTLY UNCOVERED IN TUNISIA. I SAID THAT SOVIET POLICY OF EXPANSIONISM IS HISTORICAL PHENOMENON AND THAT NO DOUBT SOVIETS WILL ENDEAVOR TO CONTINUE TO FOLLOW SUCH A POLICY. USG HAS ITS EYES WIDE OPEN WHEN IT ENGAGES IN DETENTE WITH SOVIET UNION. WE INTEND TO REMAIN STRONG AND FIRM, WHILE AT SAME TIME INCREASING DIALOGUE WITH SOVIETS IN HOPE THAT THIS WILL EVENTUALLY IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS. PRESIDENT SAID THAT USSR STILL POLICE STATE AND REFERRED TO CASE OF SAKHAROV INTERVIEW. I SAID THAT FACT THAT SAKHAROV EVEN ABLE TO GIVE INTERVIEW TO WESTERN GOVERNMENTS SUGGESTS THAT CRACKS HAVE ALREADY APPEARED IN SOVIET SYSTEM.

7. TUNISIAN NEED FOR HOSPITAL EQUIPMENT. AT END OF DISCUSSION AND BEFORE PRESENTATION OF MOON ROCK, PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD ONE THING HE WANTED TO RAISE WITH ME. FACT THAT I HAD FLOWN TO NAPLES FOR MY OPERATION LAST MAY SERVED TO UNDERLINE TUNISIAN NEED FOR MODERN HOSPITAL FACILITIES AND AMERICAN MEDICAL TECHNICIANS. ISN'T THERE SOMETHING USG CAN DO TO HELP TUNISIA IN THIS REGARD? I STRESSED THAT DECISION TO EVACUATE ME TO ITALY WAS NOT BECAUSE OPERATING FACILITIES IN TUNISIA WERE INADEQUATE BUT RATHER BECAUSE DOCTORS FEARED POST-OPERATIVE

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COMPLICATIONS MIGHT REQUIRE HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT. I NOTED THAT CARE-MEDICO AND PROJECT HOPE, TOGETHER WITH PEACE CORPS, ARE ALREADY PROVIDING ASSISTANCE IN MEDICAL FIELD. PROBLEM WITH HIS REQUEST IS THAT IT IMPLIES OUTLAY OF USG FUNDS TO TIME WHEN USG MOVING OUT OF GRANT AID AND CAPITAL PROJECTS. CURRENT EMPHASIS IN U.S. AID PROGRAMS IS ON SUCH THINGS AS FAMILY PLANNING, NUTRITION, ETC. AND TO FOCUS ON HELPING INDIGENT ELEMENTS. NONETHELESS, I SAID I WOULD CONSULT WITH CARE-MEDICO PROJECT HOPE AND PEACE CORPS TO SEE IF ANYTHING MORE COULD BE DONE ALONG LINES OF PRESIDENT'S REQUEST.

8. PRESIDENT ESTEEM FOR U.S. IN BIDDING FAREWELL, PRESIDENT EMPHASIZED, AS HE HAS FREQUENTLY BEFORE, HIGH ESTEEM HE HOLDS FOR PRESIDENT NIXON AND FOR U.S.

U.S. CAN CONTINUE TO COUNT ON TUNISIA AS A STRONG FRIEND.

9. COMMENT: PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA LOOKED AND ACTED VERY MUCH LIKE HIS OLD SELF. HE WAS RELATIVELY CALM AND SELF-POSSESSED, ALBEIT STILL DYNAMIC, AND DID NOT MANIFEST THE EMOTIONAL INTENSITY WHICH CHARACTERIZED HIS BEHAVIOR LAST SPRING.

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